

The Langston Hughesian Tragedy

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 May 2019

[0 : 00] Turn with me to Romans chapter 1. Romans chapter 1. Greetings. We bring you greetings from Palm Beach Baptist Church. We thank you all.

I realize that this is a group effort to serve the Lord and to serve others for being so hospitable. That's a gift. It's a commandment. And it's a lost practice in these days. Romans chapter 1 verses 16 and 17.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel. For it is the power of God for salvation. To everyone who believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

As it is written, but the righteous man shall live by faith. I read in your hearing Romans chapter 1 verses 16 and 17 from the New American Standard Version.

Let's bow our heads. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the kindness that you've shown us by allowing us to gather in your presence, Lord, even free of persecution, free of fear.

[1 : 43] Lord, please, please, in spite of our fallen humanity, have your way this out.

Reduce me truly to the nothing that I am. Lord, that our ears hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Lord, I buffet my flesh in this area that after preaching I might not be a castaway. Please speak, Lord. Keep us attentive. Remove the distractions. Children, thoughts for yesterday, thoughts for tomorrow.

Lord, Satan, desires to distract us. We have an enemy. He desires to distract us as well, Lord. Please let all the technology function. Let our minds be focused. Speak, Lord. Your servants hear it.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. I want to speak to you this morning. I had so much preach at you.

[2 : 51] But I really want you to listen. I really want you to listen to the heart of what's being said.

So the subject or the title of this message is The Langston Hughesian Tragedy. Named after the famed African-American poet Langston Hughes.

And the theme of this message is Understanding the purpose of the gospel. Understanding the purpose of the gospel.

In the 1940 literary narrative, the world-renowned African-American poet Langston Hughes wrote the following biographical essay entitled Salvation.

I was saved from sin when I was going on 13, but not really saved. It happened like this. There was a big revival at Monty Reed's church.

[3 : 56] Every night for weeks, there had been much preaching, singing, praying, and shouting, and some very hardened sinners have been brought to Christ. And the membership of the church had grown by leaps and bounds.

Then just before the revival ended, they held a special meeting for children to bring the young lambs to the fold. My aunt spoke of it for days ahead. That night, I was escorted to the front row and placed on the mourner's bench with all those younger, with all those other young sinners who had not yet been brought to Jesus.

My aunt told me that when you were saved, you saw a light and something happened to you inside. And Jesus came into your life and God was with you from then on. She said, You can see and hear and feel Jesus in your soul.

I believed her. I had heard a great many old people say the same thing and it seemed to me they ought to know. So I sat there calmly in the hot, crowded church waiting for Jesus to come to me.

The preacher preached a wonderful, rhythmical sermon. All moans and shouts and lonely cries and dire pictures of hell. And then he sang a song about the ninety and nine safe in the fold, but one little lamb was left out in the cold.

[5 : 03] Then he said, Won't you come? Won't you come to Jesus, young lambs? Won't you come? And he held out his arms to all us young sinners. There on the mourner's bench and the little girls cried and some of them jumped up and went to Jesus right away.

But most of us just sat there. A great many old people came and knelt around us and prayed, old women with jet black faces and braided hair, old men with work-narled hands and the church sang a song about the lower lights are burning, some poor sinners to be saved.

And the whole building rocked with prayer and song. Still I kept waiting to see Jesus. Finally, all the young people had gone to the altar and were saved, but one boy and me, he was around us, a son named Wesley.

Wesley and I were surrounded by sisters and deacons praying. It was very hot in the church and getting late now. Finally, Wesley said to me in a whisper, God darn, I'm tired of sitting here.

Let's go and be saved. So he got up and was saved. Then I was left all alone on the morning's bench. My aunt came and knelt at my knees and cried while prayers and songs swirled all around me in the little church.

[6 : 09] The whole congregation prayed for me alone in a mighty well of moans and voices. And I kept waiting serenely for Jesus, waiting, waiting, but he didn't come. I wanted to see him, but nothing happened to me.

Nothing. I wanted something to happen, but nothing happened. I heard the songs and the minister sang, why don't you come, my dear child? Why don't you come to Jesus? Jesus is waiting for you.

He wants you. Why don't you come? Sister Reed, what is this child's name? Langston, my aunt sobbed. Langston, why don't you come?

Why don't you come and be saved, O Lamb of God? Why don't you come? That was really getting late. I began to be ashamed of myself holding everything up so long. I began to wonder what God thought about Wesley, who certain hadn't seen Jesus either, but who was now sitting proudly on the platform, swinging his knickerbockered legs and grinning down at me, surrounded by deacons and old women on their knees praying.

God had not struck Wesley dead for taking his name in vain or lying in the temple. So I decided that maybe to save further trouble, I'd better lie too and say that Jesus has come and get up and be saved.

[7 : 17] So I got up. Suddenly the whole room broke into a sea of shouting as they saw me rise. Waves of rejoicing swept the place. Women leaped in the air. My aunt threw her arms around me.

The minister took me by the hand and led me to the platform. When things quieted down in a hushed silence, punctuated by a few ecstatic amens, all the new young lambs were blessed in the name of God.

Then joyous singing filled the room. That night, for the first time in my life, but one, for I was a big boy, 12 years old, I cried. I cried in bed alone and I couldn't stop.

I buried my head under the quilts, but my aunt heard me. She woke up and told my uncle I was crying because the Holy Ghost had come into my life and because I had seen Jesus. But I was really crying because I couldn't bear to tell her that I had lied, that I had deceived everybody in the church, that I hadn't seen Jesus and that now I didn't believe there was a Jesus anymore since he didn't come to help me.

The account we just heard is nothing short of a tragedy. That's a tragedy. The tragicity of it is found not only in the outcome, but shamefully here today in its frequency.

[8 : 55] It is a systemic problem in our church. Listen, these churchgoers wanted Langston Hughes to be saved.

Langston Hughes himself was open to being saved. But he could not be saved because he wasn't given a proper explanation of the gospel.

the fact that they didn't preach it tells me that they didn't know its purpose or even what it was.

So they were forced to resort to this type of demoralizing and emotionally draining manipulation. temptation. Huh?

We are called to compel people to come. Don't deny that. But a compulsion that excludes the gospel in an attempt to bypass the intellect.

[10 : 10] A compulsion that seeks to exhaust a person and wear them out until they give up and come into the kingdom is an impotent compulsion. cannot save a single solitary soul.

The gospel is the theme of the biblical Christian faith. It has a specific purpose and specific content.

Huh? Huh? No one is saying that you must master every nuance of the whole of the Christian faith to be saved.

We're not saying that. As Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones said, there must be a clear understanding about an irreducible minimum.

You cannot be a Christian at all unless you have that. no matter how much you cry, no matter how much you've been to church, no matter how much you know the traditions of what your hot cross vans and fish, you must have heard and understood content.

[11 : 34] And the purpose must have been applied in order for one to be one again. Amen. Amen. The book of Romans is written by Paul to a church that was never formally founded by an apostle.

This formation was the result of the spreading of the gospel through the Jewish diaspora. Jews who had come to faith at Pentecost carried the gospel to various Gentile cities and shared it to their neighbors.

Paul had hoped to visit the church at Rome by this time but he had been providentially hindered. They were wondering if Paul was perhaps ashamed of them in the gospel. On top of that this mixed church had questions about the gospel and how it applies to everyday life.

Still being unable to visit and out of concern for the spiritual health of the church Paul pens this epistle. It contains within it that irreducible minimum that will keep them until he can see them face to face.

introduction. The introduction of this letter is found in verses 1 through 17 and it's divided into three sections. First the address and salutation verses 1 through 7.

[12 : 58] It is here that he affirms his apostolic commitment to the gospel in the Gentile church in Rome. Second section the thanksgiving found in verses 8 through 15.

He asserts his eagerness to both see them and preach the gospel to them for their sake and his. And finally our text verses 17 and 18 the theme of the letter and honestly the entire Bible.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as it is written but the righteous man shall live by faith.

In these two verses Paul answers the following five questions as it concerns the purpose of the gospel. Verse 16 we want to look at what it is what it does how it is received and who it is for what it is what it does how it is received what it is for in verse 17 we want to look at why it works five irreducible minimums five irreducible minimums of which one must have an understanding if he or she is to be truly saved then we will conclude with a proper presentation of the gospel now before we look at these five truths we want to first notice how they affect Paul's gospel demeanor these truths affect Paul's demeanor toward the gospel for he says this is the reason he gives for not being ashamed these truths he says

I am not ashamed of the gospel if a person has been truly saved by the gospel they will not be ashamed of it will not be ashamed of it they will boast in the cross of our Lord they will have a proud affection for its content this is why I get a little sideways when I hear people say that their faith is private because how can one proclaim a private gospel one of those has got to give it can't be private and proclaimed amen now if a person is ashamed or flat out embarrassed by the gospel either they don't understand it don't believe it's true or they are convicted by it but don't like it just don't like it don't like what it's saying about them all three of these gospel demeanors emanate from the heart of a lost person now

[16 : 05] Paul makes this statement I am not ashamed the question is this why would anyone even assume Paul was ashamed of the gospel why would someone even assume and what does he mean by this statement in context the Jews were being ostracized from their brothers because of the gospel and to the Gentiles the gospel is considered in those days was considered in those days a backwards religion of the poor and uneducated Paul is saying in essence I am aware of the stigma that accompanies the gospel nevertheless it is so indispensable to me that I will boldly identify myself with it and his stigma see that it's similar back in the 80s it became popular 80s similar to wearing braces back in the 1980s when braces came out they had a stigma if you wore braces on your teeth you were considered geeky or nerdy or uncool and so especially amongst adolescents for children it was tough you wore braces they picked on you braces and glasses and so everyone would say look at those railroad tracks on your teeth that's what they would say when you had braces in fact the only thing worse than having braces would be having crooked teeth now when one first gets braces you initially have two problems because now you have crooked teeth and railroad tracks until the braces can have their desired effect but once the corrective work has been completed and your braces removed you now have no railroad tracks and no crooked teeth and you're better off than you were when you first started now so all the orthodontist had to do and it was tough at first but all the orthodontist had to do to get you to be unashamed of wearing braces is convince you of the results so whenever you walk into an orthodontist what you'll see is a before and after picture and you look at those teeth and you go oh gosh and you look at after the braces and you go oh wow that'll work for me now in scripture there may be no greater before and after picture concerning the gospel than this author

Paul of Tarsus Paul's before picture was that of an ugly soul breathing threats and slaughter on the church of God his after picture was that of a man who suffered and died for the body of Christ now what caused this change it was the invasive gospel of Jesus Christ listen you either love it or you hate it you either love it or you hate it man it ain't no in between you either love it or you hate it why because the human soul is so dark and and secretive and vulnerable and it is a well guarded place some of us are even burdened and haunted by the darkness that is in it and we want deliverance from it others are suppressing the truth masquerading as if our lives are pristine and God worthy then along comes a Christian preaching the gospel yes full of love but it's a threatening love it's a threatening love in ways we've never experienced it it violates and penetrates and cuts and it it it it's so honest and frightening this gospel and this love

I remember as the Lord was drawing me in college his gospel was so heavy upon me I wasn't saved but I was going to church and I was able to manage church life all on my own got up went to church went to Sunday school went to Bible study came home I was able to manage church life church life wasn't invasive but the pastor kept preaching the gospel and it was like the gospel was a distraction to my church life it was it was messing me up because I had compartmentalized my professed Christianity and here here he was with this gospel that kept telling me that everything I did the million man marching and volunteering at the elementary school and just having one girlfriend wasn't good enough the gospel kept overwhelming the church life didn't bother me the gospel did it's demands at this point when the gospel begins to overwhelm us we either give in and say

Lord what must I do to be saved which is what I did or we gnash our teeth in anger at the instrument of God Paul says I know about the hostility that comes with the gospel I've given and received I am still not ashamed because I know what the gospel is 16 clause B he says what is it what is it what is he says it is the power of God the nature of the gospel is that it has within it a power that only comes from God the gospel is an exclusive display of God's exclusive power it is a power that man does not have for something that man needs now what is that something that man needs he says it right then the next clause the power of God for salvation salvation that's that's what it does the gospel that's what it does it saves men what is the power of the power of God what does it do it saves men so now we have two adjacent principles that flow out of this statement he says power of God to save if the if the gospel saves by the power of God then we know for sure two things first one is that man apparently must need to be saved that's one thing if you were just reading this text you would say man man must need to be saved there would be no need for a gospel of salvation if men needed no saving right we'll find out on we'll find out from what why they need saving later on the second implied truth is this man must not be able to save himself why would

God go through such lengths as sacrificing! if man could save himself and why would we suffer the reproach of Christ if we had the power to save ourselves now so now that we know what it is the power of God and what it does bring salvation the question is how is it received the text says that is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes who believes how is it received one salvation is received by properly believing the gospel now a person can receive this salvation that comes by the power of God not by working hard to be a good person not by going to church not by reading your Bible not even not even preaching the gospel will save you

[24 : 12] I know a lot of unsaved preachers people get saved off their messages and they're lost they're lost even understanding the gospel alone cannot save you it's necessary if you're going to be saved but one but but understanding the gospel does not guarantee that you will be saved you must understand it to believe it demons understand the gospel there are people in here who have just heard it over and over and over again and just can relate the content of it it must be the only way a person can receive salvation is by believing the God empowered gospel God is not empowered going to church as a means of salvation he has not empowered church work as a means of salvation he has not empowered

Islam modern Judaism Hinduism or Mormonism as a means of salvation only the true gospel properly believed can save a man now why do I say properly believe the word there the stuo means to trust to be persuaded to place confidence in let's say you find yourself driving through a same strange city you've never been to you're not familiar with stop at a McDonald's somewhere Wendy's here to get a bite to eat and you notice the gas tank is almost empty notice the gas tank is almost empty you see two people leaving Wendy's walking toward the car you ask both men where is the closest gas station where is the closest gas station one guy says I believe there's one about five miles north the other guy says

I am trusting there is one five miles south who will you follow yeah you and why you know you can follow the one that's trusting in that right because if he is wrong y'all in the same boat y'all on the side of the road out of gas so he must you know intuitively that when a person trusts there's an expression of dependence in that right when a person is depending on something they can't afford for their confidence to be false and that right the author of hebrew warns do not throw away your confidence which has great reward properly believing the gospel is not accepting the gospel as merely true and historically factual believing the gospel is to bet your soul on it huh betting my soul on it properly believing the gospel involves trust but properly believing also involves duration this word stuo this word believe is the present active participle the present participle expresses continuous or repeated action a saving faith is a faith that trusts the gospel to the very end it's not just

I had a feeling one moment and I said I believe that's not what saving faith is the type of faith that saves a man that saves a woman that saves a person is a faith that perseveres perseveres!

John 8 31 and 32 gospel of John says this so Jesus was saying to these Jews who had believed him if you continue in my word then you are truly disciples of mine and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free man so if a person does not continue in his word this person has not ceased to be a disciple of Christ they proved that they were never truly disciples of Christ see that Colossians 1 22 and 23 yet he has now reconciled you in his fleshly body through death in order to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard which was proclaimed in all creation in the heaven and of which

[29 : 07] I Paul was made a minister again reconciled to which can be expressed as not moving away from the hope of the gospel this perseverance in the faith is the mark of a true believer the faith that we get if it's genuine upon our inception of believing is a faith that always continues always continues if you are living a life continuously that is contrary to the gospel in holiness and its affections in your duties and responsibilities you have every reason to assume and every reason to believe that you are not saved and were never saved now does this mean our faith cannot waver that we can never doubt or get discouraged of course not you may have a hurtful church experience that shakes your faith some college professor asks!

you a question about your faith that you can't answer I knew a guy who went to the hospital daughter had a fever they gave her some penicillin she went a cardiac arrest and he prayed he prayed prayed that the Lord would heal her cried out she died nine year old daughter died and he stopped going to church for three years and he shouted out in the hospital I'll never ask you for anything again shouted out to the Lord I'll never ask you for anything again and he said as he was leaving he heard a small voice say you will in time three years later we left to go to a conference and he said you know I want to go I think it's time came across a man out evangelizing he was drunk there was alcohol you gotta be careful because you don't know what people have been going to alcohol on his breath out cutting the grass we stopped to go talk with him asked if you were a Christian he said yeah!

I haven't been to church in a while I had my doubts because I could smell the alcohol and he had been to church in over a month or two months and I said well sir you need to go to church God wants us to be a part of a body to be strengthened he said I know he said but my wife just died a month ago and as we talked about he turned back to something temporarily that used to give him comfort in the world and that day we prayed and he prayed Lord forgive me for doing what I been doing Lord I know what I need to do I need to turn back around I know I need to go Lord forgive me the man is seen from his prayer to be genuinely saved was in a!

of life in a! so these truly saved if you go back out into the world for a season you'll be miserable and you won't find satisfaction if you truly believed in the beginning you'll return and persevere because God doesn't let go of those whose hand he's holding and he can't be snatched out no one can snatch you out of his hand not even despair not even depression not even church disappointment to snatch you out of God's hand because you're not saved by the church you're saved by God now so now we know what the gospel is it is the power of God we know what the gospel does it brings salvation we know how salvation is received one must trust or believe in the gospel but what is the gospel for who is the gospel for who is the gospel for text everyone who believes everyone who believes is not just for one group of people it is a gospel for all men now he gives an order of revelation to the

Jew first and also to the Greek what does that mean it is not saying that God loves Jews more than Gentiles God is saying rather that God's original tent was for the Jews to be a kingdom of priests his original tent was now their rejection of God brought about a need for a Messiah or Savior so the Lord sent Jesus his son all of this of course is predetermined but this is in time what it looks like now the chief cornerstone was rejected by the Jews so God has offered salvation to the Gentiles and that same offer to the Jews again scripture teaches this is why the gospel was preached to the Jews first anytime you see it in the book of Acts anytime you see Paul or Peter the gospel was preached to the Jews first as he was their Messiah but then to all men so in Acts chapter 13 verse 46 when the Jews opposed Paul and

[34 : 10] Barnabas and Antioch the text says Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said it was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first Jews since you repudiated and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life behold we are turning to the Gentiles that God now calls all men everywhere to repent if you believe the gospel is only for a certain race class or gender or generation you have embraced a false gospel and you don't understand the purpose of the true gospel God does not exclude any culture and listen this is important God will not exclude anything about that culture but their sin if you knowingly and willfully teach that a person must conform to

Jewish culture or any other tradition along with believing the gospel in order to be saved that's a false gospel Paul says let such a person or even an angel be anathema be cursed one west Hebrew Israelites believe white people Europeans and other groups should not be offered repentance that they can't repent they can't be saved that's what they believe if you imply this truth with your lifestyle and how you interact with others as Peter did you should be publicly rebuked we are not above this temptation I know missionaries who go plant churches and they might not say it but they imply that if you don't adopt American songs and American culture and

American themes that you not really live in the gospel right and that's not true older people do this with younger generations they wear dreadlocks because they wear skinny jeans or whatever it is that they might not like or see as uncool and there's nothing in the Bible that says otherwise and you become a stumbling block and you imply that not only do they have to be saved and believe the gospel but they got to change the style of dress and dress like the 80 and you have to be rebuked for that you cannot be a stumbling you make sure if you if you don't like gospel rap because you don't like rap that's your business but you don't tell the person that they're sinning or those people that they're sinning if you don't have evidence of it from the scripture not your preferences you believe certain groups for whatever reason do not need the gospel you don't understand it not only is it for all men as if everybody is eligible everybody is responsible there are some groups who have a hyper dispensation they believe

Jews don't need to repent they're saved no one is above the gospel and no one is beneath it amen it's truly a gospel for all men now review so now we know what the gospel is it is the power of god we know what the gospel does it brings salvation we know how salvation is received one must continuously believe or trust in the gospel the final question is why does the gospel work why does it save us what need is it meeting what need is it meeting why do we need this!

why do we! verse 17 for it is the righteousness of god listen when you're reading your bible do you see answers parenthetically I just want to mention that when you're reading your bible and someone's preaching and you're following along do you see answers questions to questions that you have that the world has why are you here is this is this a relic or do you live by it is it greater than your necessary food text says we need the gospel is right there because it makes us righteous apparently we need the righteousness of god and the gospel reveals that huh the gospel reveals to us a righteousness that comes from god and is available only to us through the gospel itself here's the heart of a matter we have a need for that righteousness and it doesn't matter how much church you attend or how long you've attended it you're hell bound without it our righteousness our unrighteousness is a huge problem in god's eyes if not in our own god sent his son to die on the cross for our unrighteousness so that we may not be punished he he has given us his son's righteousness that we might be justified before him it's imputed it's foreign it's placed upon us unearned sovereignly given listen listen the gospel will not be precious to us it will not be appealing to us we will not want to be seen with it we will be ashamed of it if we don't understand how desperately we and others need it that's why paul said i'm not ashamed i know the power of it i know the consequences of it i know what it brings about i understand the seriousness of the urgency it's the most important message that has ever entered the world and what it does saving the man's soul is the most important thing that can be done i'm not ashamed of it i'm not ashamed of it the righteousness of god is revealed from faith to faith this verse is intended to support what was said before those words there are more than a few attempts to understand what faith to faith means i believe paul is speaking about how the gospel was spread in his time and historically again jews who had faith spread the gospel to gentiles who also believed by faith and of course all who believe are in a sense benefactors of jews who believed and revealed the messiah and the gospel to us here he quotes habakkuk when he says but the righteous shall live by faith but he uses the verse in a different way he is adding a spiritual component to it those who believe or have faith in the gospel are counted as righteous the righteous people shall live that is not experience god's wrath i believe the living there is saying that you're not going to die you're not going to experience god's wrath by that same faith this is the purpose of the gospel

[42:19] you just heard was the purpose of the gospel now i'm going to look at some content and i'm going to present it as if you were presenting it to someone bad news sin is transgression of the law breaking god's commandments any and all sin makes us worthy of hell the second death the just pouring out of god's wrath for eternity because of our sin we are worthy of death and we know it the wages of sin is death it separated us from god all men what is the gospel the gospel that's the bad news means good news jesus the son of god and god himself became man he was born of a virgin and lived a sinless and perfectly righteous life he broke no laws he broke no laws he broke no commandments in thought or in deed and he kept everyone that he was required to keep in thought or in deed even so he was crucified and died in our place for the forgiveness of our sins so his righteous life if you go stand before god and say and god says why should i let you in heaven you can't say because i've been a good person you can't say because i try you can't say because i have god in my heart you have to be able to say the only reason i should be allowed in your presence is because the righteousness of christ has been placed upon me and made me positionally righteous in your speed that's it even though practically i'm unrighteous positionally i am righteous because of the blood of christ because of his sacrifice for me that is the only reason i can stand in your presence uncondemned see that now if god says even so he said i have to punish you for your sin what do i do to punish you you still did something wrong there has to be punishment you say no you punished me in christ on the cross your wrath has been satisfied your anger has been satisfied there's no left over even for the sins that i'm going to do have to there's nothing left over it has all been satisfied on the cross see that now on the third day he rose from the grave in bodily form showing that he has power over death in the grave he ascended to the right hand of the father and he has prepared a place for us and there he is currently interceding on our behalf he will return again for his own and we will be with him and glorify him and enjoy him forever this is the content this is gospel content and purpose it is not ancillary to the function of the church it is essential to the church's vitality if you do not preach this you will have a church filled with lengths and hueses and that's what you have don't you maybe not this church but you know what i'm talking about we all been there you see them those of you who are dedicated to the gospel and have that content you know what it's like impotent cultural

Christians replacing the power of the Holy Spirit with baseless emotions they'll fake it and they'll go to bed crying tears of hopelessness and their blood will be on our hands listen to it listen to it conclusion conclusion when i'm out evangelizing first thing i ask a person in America America is kind of like especially in the south everybody is a Christian everybody is a Christian first thing i ask a person are you a Christian this is how the conversation goes about 70% of the time yes yes i'm a Christian so yes yes yeah i grew up in the church i was born a Christian i was born a church i say sir what is a Christian they say oh a Christian is a person that reads the Bible and put God's first in their life they don't just talk the talk but they walk the walk they take God with them everywhere they go and i say sir how does one become a

Christian they pause for a second and they look at me as if they say i never thought about that and i interject i say that's a fair question right you said you were a Christian they say no no that's fair so you want my opinion i say no according to the Bible they'll put their head down in shame they'll get really quiet and sometimes tears might start to them and they say to me i've seen a million times the door half open come in and step behind the door i don't know can you please explain it to me can you please explain it to me i don't know my heart is broken when i see that because all i can see sometimes is a 50 year old 55 year old sometimes 65 year old man or woman and when i look at him all i see is a 12 year old

Langston Hughes in front of me that's all I see it's a Langston Hughesian tragedy that's all I see still crying still thinking it and when we look at each other we both know shame on the church for allowing that type of false delusion false conversion to just proliferate as long as people come and give tithes and pay numbers and shake good job pastor I love you good job thank you pastor what a great mess I don't want to hear that mess man I don't need your flattery I don't want to hear a good job I want you to be saved I want you to know the Lord he's the only one that does a good job nothing good in me but Christ Jesus and you can't flatter your way into the kingdom and I can't take you with me God won't save you because you supported me so well because you swept every

Sunday every every every every Sunday deaconess sweeps the back of the church every Friday deaconess so and so she always cleans up boy that woman's a faith must be God in her some kind of way and she doesn't know the gospel understand the content an irreducible minimum he's not saved he's not saved no matter how bad I want him to be saved Lord knows I want him to be saved back but if you if you if a person fakes it what good is that if you just let them just bleed to death spiritually in front of you what good is that I don't like walking up to people telling people I don't you know I think you really need to examine yourself brother so to see if you're in the faith that's the last thing I want to say it's the second to the last thing the last thing I ever want to hear is depart from me you work of iniquity for I never knew that's the only reason

[50:17] I say it that's the only reason I risked their offense I don't like it I challenge you we all know people like this especially in a place where Christianity is the norm talk to your family members and friends of yours say mama mama I know you've been in church all your life you were faithful at the jumper church Presbyterian church you were faithful I know you've been in church all your life but I just want to be sure mama what is the gospel and what is its purpose if they don't know the answer explain it to them and call them to obey if you are here today and you are concerned I might be a Langston Hughes Christian go to your pastor don't be embarrassed I would never let anybody embarrass me out of my out of salvation of my soul pastor we need to talk

I spent my whole life in the church and racked up a lot! I even know how to match scripture to certain life applications but the truth is when I'm here my responses are just trained habits and even then I don't feel any affection for God or the things of God and when I leave here Christ and the souls of man are the last things on my mind pastor I'm starting to wonder if I've been absorbed in a cultural Christianity pastor I think I've been caught up in the trappings of my traditional upbringing that's why you have to beg me to get involved and beg me to do this and beg me to do that and beg me to do that I'm doing I'm just I've compartmentalized my church and my church life pastor more and more I'm realizing that I've been living a lot Langston

Hughes Christian perhaps perhaps you know a Langston Hughes Christian but I'll say this your life is not a tragedy not yet you or they still have a chance they still have a chance to avoid the most shameful and bloody thing that could ever happen to a person to go to hell from the church house what a shame what a disgrace my heart should break my heart should break man you gotta listen listen to me listen to me listen to me you're going to have to risk some relationships because you love someone so much that you're going to tell them the truth they may call you arrogant or hardy or self righteous you think you're over at that reformed church

I know what they believe over there you think ain't nobody said you can't worry about that if you know they don't understand the content of the gospel and can't explain it at least get the blood off people don't have a clue about what church is what the gospel is who Jesus is all they do they're just saying stuff they heard they're no more hymns than bible verses you won't share it you won't talk about it you won't pull them aside with a gentle prayerful heart and speak to me you have relatives especially older people you know what I'm talking about please have enough love in your heart to bear let them thank you in heaven they'll like you in heaven they don't like you now let's pray heavenly father we thank you for your grace and for your mercy we thank you for the gospel there are a lot of messages in this world every time you turn on the

TV somebody's telling you to call this number dial this number read this book they'll have your whole life fixed up if you just call here if you just go there if you just try this principle Lord the only message that can save us in this world and the next is the gospel our Lord if we truly love people parents we know what it's like to have to hurt someone to love them we know what it's like if we have friends that to tell them something they don't want to hear because we love them how much more should we do that with humility with brokenness but with boldness and a desire to say I must be more faithful to God than man I don't want this person lost and they're just going to church and coming home and afterward they're cursing and they're lying and they're going to carnival and there's a disconnect and I don't believe they know and understand the gospel I have to at least say it to them even if they get upset with me even if they don't talk to me even if they don't invite me to places or things anymore that's the way that's all

[55 : 44] I see in scripture that's the way it goes help me to love them enough and love God enough love you enough Lord to fulfill my purpose here to share your gospel that we don't have any more Langston Hughes tragedies so much as it depends on me Jesus name we pray amen